

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Notice of Finding on a Petition to List

Cladonia perforata (Perforate Reindeer Lichen)

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of finding on petition.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces a 90-day petition finding for a petition to amend the List of Endangered and Threatened Plants. Substantial information has been presented that a petition to list the lichen *Cladonia perforata* (perforate reindeer lichen), from Florida, is warranted. Formal review of the status of *Cladonia perforata* is initiated herewith.

DATES: The finding announced in this notice was made in August 1989. Comments and information may be submitted until further notice.

ADDRESSES: Information, comments, or questions should be sent to the Field Supervisor, Jacksonville Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 3100 University Boulevard South, Suite 120, Jacksonville, Florida 32216.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David J. Wesley, Field Supervisor, at the above address (telephone: 904/791-2580 or FTS 946-2580).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 4(b)(3)(A) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended in 1982 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) requires that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) make a finding on whether a species presents substantial scientific or commercial information to demonstrate that the petitioned action may be warranted. To the maximum extent practicable, this finding is to be made within 90 days of the receipt of the petition, and the finding is to be published promptly in the Federal Register. If the finding is positive, the Service is also required to promptly commence a review of the status of the species.

Ann Buckley, a staff member of the George M. Gray Museum, Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, Massachusetts, submitted a petition to

list *Cladonia perforata* as an endangered species. The petition, dated May 28, 1989, was received by the Service on June 5, 1989.

The petition cited rapid development of the limited scrub habitat occupied by *Cladonia perforata* on the Lake Wales Ridge of central Florida as the primary threat to the lichen, combined with the frequency of fire in the remaining habitat (fires destroy group dwelling lichens). The petition cited the results of a lichen inventory at and near Archbold Biological Station in Highlands County, central Florida (Buckley and Hendrickson 1988), as well as the results of a search for this lichen by Dr. James Burkhalter and Dr. Gerould Wilhelm in May 1989 at Elgin Air Force Base and Santa Rosa Island on the Gulf coast of western Florida. Burkhalter and Wilhelm relocated a previously known population of the lichen and plan to publish a note on the discovery (file information, Florida Natural Areas Inventory). The site may be vulnerable to washover during hurricanes; in addition, the site is open to public use and is therefore subject to trampling by visitors (letter from Dr. Ann F. Johnson, Florida Natural Areas Inventory).

In central Florida's Highlands County, the loss of scrub habitat is already well documented; the Service has listed eight plants and three animals native to scrub vegetation in this county as endangered or threatened species, has prepared a recovery plan for one of the plants (Fish and Wildlife Service 1987) and is drafting another recovery plan for scrub plant species (Fish and Wildlife Service 1989). The draft plan summarizes the threats to scrub vegetation and prescribes conservation measures. To the extent that the plan is implemented, it may reduce the threats to *Cladonia perforata*.

Before proposing to list *Cladonia perforata* as an endangered or threatened species, the Service should ensure that the true geographic distribution of this lichen is known. This will require searches of areas with excessively drained white sand soil, scrub vegetation, and populations of ground-dwelling lichens in bare sunny areas where fires or other severe disturbances occur very rarely. Appropriate places to search include the Gulf Coast barrier islands from Mobile to Panama City, the Cedar Key area, the Atlantic Coastal Ridge on the east coast of Florida, and inland scrub vegetation in the Ocala National Forest and on the Lake Wales Ridge in Polk County. Because this lichen apparently has a very specialized habitat, and because

this lichen is easy to recognize throughout the year, effecting searches are feasible. Despite the need for further searches, the Service found that the petition and its supporting data presented substantial information indicating that the requested action may be warranted.

Review of the status of *Cladonia perforata* is initiated with publication of this notice. The Service would appreciate any additional data, comments, and suggestions from the public, other concerned governmental agencies, the scientific community, industry, or any interested party concerning *Cladonia perforata*.

Author

This notice was prepared by Mr. David Martin, Jacksonville Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 3100 University Boulevard South, Suite 120, Jacksonville, Florida 32216 (904/791-2580 or FTS 946-2580).

References

- Buckley, A., and T.O. Hendrickson. 1988. The distribution of *Cladonia perforata* Evans on the southern Lake Wales Ridge in Highlands County, Florida. *The Bryologist* 91:354-356.
- Fish and Wildlife Service. 1987. Recovery plan for three Florida mints. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region, Atlanta, GA. 21 pp.
- Fish and Wildlife Service. 1989. Agency draft recovery plan for eleven central Florida plants. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeastern Region, Atlanta, GA. 56 pp. + maps, tables.

Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*)

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 17

Endangered and threatened species, Fish, Marine mammals, Plants (agriculture).

Dated: October 3, 1989.

Richard N. Smith,

Acting Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.
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50 CFR Part 17

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Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Proposed Threatened Status for *Harrisia portoricensis*

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Proposed rule.